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Sustainable development

Social development

Letter dated 7 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to refer to the declaration entitled "Sustainable societies; responsive citizens", which was adopted at the sixty-fourth annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations, held in Bonn, Germany, on 5 September 2011 (see annex).

Germany was privileged to host this important meeting of the world's community of non-governmental organizations, thus contributing to the preparations of civil society for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, in December 2011, and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), in June 2012.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 19 and 27.

(*Signed*) Peter **Wittig**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 7 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Declaration adopted at the sixty-fourth annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations Bonn, Germany, 3-5 September 2011 Sustainable societies; responsive citizens

Introduction

The participants at the sixty-fourth Annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations, assembled from 3 to 5 September 2011 in Bonn, Germany, seat of United Nations organizations and conventions working for sustainable development worldwide and home to an interdisciplinary cluster of non-governmental organizations and institutions working in the fields of volunteerism, environment and development,

Noting that the sixty-fourth annual Conference is a major stakeholder event aimed at contributing to the two volunteer-focused sessions of the General Assembly scheduled to take place on 5 December 2011 in New York to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers,

Noting also that the Conference aims to inform the preparatory process towards the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012,

Bearing in mind the objective of Rio+20, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/236, to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges, which include the themes of green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development and the institutional framework for sustainable development,

Mindful of the failure of States to subsequently address the urgency conveyed in the opening paragraph of Agenda 21, which states:

> Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being....

Noting the need to reaffirm and renew Agenda 21, which in paragraph 3.7 stresses that sustainable development must be achieved at every level of society and that Governments, in cooperation with appropriate international and non-governmental organizations, should support a community-driven approach to sustainability,

Recognizing that the strength of sustainable development is its inherent nature to interlink problems and solutions across a wide spectrum of "issue silos",

Guided by the outcome documents of the major global summits of the 1980s and the 1990s, Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and the Cochabamba Peoples' Trade Agreement,

Recalling that the Earth Charter, together with the Culture of Peace, can play a vital role in helping to inspire renewed political commitment expected for Rio+20 and to guide the transition to a sustainable, just and peaceful society with respect and care for the entire community of life,

Recalling also the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, in particular principle 10, on the need to ensure participation of all concerned citizens in environmental decision-making and access to environmental information and environmental justice, and principles 20 to 22, on the need to promote the participation of women, youth and indigenous peoples,

Reaffirming the importance of attaining the goals set in the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Millennium Development Goals,

Further guided by General Assembly resolution 63/153, in which the Assembly invited Governments and other stakeholders to carry out activities focused on marking the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers,

Bearing in mind that the General Assembly, in paragraph 16 of the same resolution, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session on the implementation of the tenth anniversary of the International Year under the item entitled "Social development", to be pursued by the United Nations Volunteers programme, its partners and other relevant parts of the United Nations system,

Aware of the need for a follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, and noting that the momentum created has contributed to an increase in the vibrancy of volunteerism nationally, regionally and globally, with the involvement of more Governments, more civil society organizations, more private sector partners and more people from a broader cross section of societies,

General statements

Recognizing that human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature,

Alarmed at the increasing loss of biodiversity, the rate of desertification, deforestation, especially in the tropics, and forest degradation globally, the collapse of fishery resources and the aggravated effects resulting from global warming,

Recognizing that biodiversity and linguistic diversity are inseparable, and alarmed at the loss of traditional knowledge caused by the loss of linguistic diversity,

Concerned about climate change and its effects, including in exacerbating biodiversity loss, ocean acidification and the collapse of glaciers, ice caps and polar ice shelves,

Recognizing that billions of people remain in poverty and that poverty often has a female face,

Recognizing also the lack of consistent and sustainable sources of energy for both the developed and the developing world, unsustainable agriculture and the rise in food prices,

Taking note of the interrelationships among environmental challenges, climate change, the food crisis and monetary and financial instability, which are aggravated by the unprecedented concentration of resources and flagrant inequities among people,

Noting that solutions based on deregulated markets have accentuated the problems and have brought adverse consequences to humanity and that commitments on financing for development have not been fulfilled,

Recognizing that the current monetary, financial, commercial and economic systems, along with unequal power relations, are the main drivers for the active process of environmental, moral and spiritual impoverishment,

Recognizing also that peace, the promotion of the culture of peace and respect for human rights are constitutive elements for sustainable development and that the large expenditures being allocated to warfare and military activities, including research, in particular for the use of nuclear weapons, represent a serious threat to the planet, affecting the lives of people everywhere, and pose unacceptable risks, in particular in respect of the storage of nuclear waste and uranium mining on the sacred lands of indigenous peoples and the potential nuclear reactor damage posed by natural and human-made hazards,

Calling upon States Members of the United Nations and all stakeholders to take immediate action in addressing the alarming crisis and famine in the Horn of Africa,

Acknowledging that sustainable development as a means to ensure human well-being requires that interrelationships between populations, resources, the environment and development be fully understood, recognized, appropriately managed and brought into harmonious, dynamic balance and that States promote appropriate policies, including population-related and linguistic policies, to meet the needs of current and future generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,

Recognizing that the regime of internationally agreed development goals is the foundation for sustainable development and that business-as-usual practices and policies should not be accepted,

Highlighting the need for youth empowerment through formal and non-formal education in sustainable development, as well as through participation at all levels and stages of decision-making processes,

Acknowledging the important role of formal, non-formal, informal and vocational learning and lifelong education for sustainable development,

Acknowledging also synergies and interrelationships between gender equality and sustainable development, the importance of girls' and women's participation in decision-making in sustainable development processes and governance at all levels and their role as agents of change, and the need to ensure their full contribution to building green economies and sustainable societies,

Committed to promoting respect for cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity and fostering solidarity and reciprocity among peoples, including indigenous peoples and nations, and alliance and partnership among civilizations,

Aware of the important role that the media and modern means of communication play in raising awareness, facilitating collaboration, promoting sustainable behaviour and developing South-South news distribution mechanisms,

Recognizing that people and nature are interdependent and that the "global commons" — the air and oceans, for example — are resources on which we all rely, we encourage communities, Governments and other stakeholders to manage and share the responsibility of making decisions on safeguarding and increasing the fruits of nature and society that form the foundation of a green economy,

Recognizing also that biodiversity and linguistic diversity are inseparable, connected and interdependent, and alarmed at the increasing loss of linguistic diversity, which leads to the loss of traditional knowledge essential for maintaining biodiversity,

Recognizing further that the implementation of the sustainable development agenda requires, besides strong political actions and political leadership, the everyday, voluntary actions of millions of people and civil society organizations across the globe,

Recognizing and enhancing the impact of volunteering on adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and on the development of sustainable livelihoods, and keeping in mind the long history of volunteer engagement in environmental issues, it will be important to acknowledge that the role of citizen engagement and volunteer action will become even more significant in assuring an environmentally sustainable future and a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, particularly as we approach Rio+20,

Recognizing the role of volunteerism in achieving sustainable societies by fostering social inclusion and as a means to involve and benefit all segments of society, including women, children, young people, older persons, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, minorities, migrants and those excluded and made vulnerable for social, linguistic or economic reasons,

Recognizing also that volunteerism, as a type of non-formal education, offers opportunities for young people to take responsibility for their livelihoods, acquire skills and capacities and act as positive role models for other young people,

Reaffirming that volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at mobilizing communities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, inter alia, in such areas as poverty eradication, community-centred sustainable development, health, including sexual and reproductive health, disaster risk reduction, disaster recovery management and peacekeeping,

Recognizing that volunteerism, in taking centre stage for inspiring the global development dialogue, should lead the way for the efforts of all stakeholders to develop a shared vision of partnership for the growth of the global commons in such areas as education, both at the microlevel in families and at the national level, youth activism through the arts, online journalism and innovative, continuing methods of self-organization and collective action, which should be documented and promoted by appropriate global information systems,

Highlighting the crucial contribution of volunteering in post-conflict contexts to construct sustainable societies by rebuilding institutions, local capacity and social cohesion through various forms of volunteering.

The non-governmental organizations here present in Bonn, Germany, on 5 September 2011, declare the following on the matter of a green economy in the context of poverty eradication, sustainable lifestyles, education and lifelong learning for sustainable development, civic engagement in sustainable development governance and volunteerism:

Rio+20 and civic engagement

We call upon Governments to adopt the sustainable development goals set out below.

We encourage all stakeholders to become involved in Rio+20 and to make their own commitments to sustainable development.

We call upon Governments to:

- Come to Rio+20 represented by Heads of State or Government, with concrete commitments to take individual and collective action towards sustainable development and to address gaps and emerging issues, on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.
- Produce a politically binding outcome document that recommits Governments to the achievement of sustainable development.
- Generate an annex to the outcome document containing country commitments to form the foundation of a global registry of sustainability actions and major stakeholder commitments, which include robust monitoring and reporting provisions.

We call for the preparation and implementation of green economy road maps that consider and address the commonly agreed Rio Principles, for the adoption of sustainable development goals in critical areas, for the implementation of governance reforms to foster the transition to a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication by fostering civic engagement and volunteerism, and for the improvement of the institutional framework for sustainable development.

We call for the replacement of the current inefficient, unsustainable and inequitable economic, monetary, financial and commercial models, with policies that advance rather than detract from sustainable development goals and that build rather than deplete the stocks of natural, human, built and social capital on which human well-being ultimately depends. We propose that where the current economy aids inequity, destruction and greed, it should be replaced by an economy that cares for the human-earth community.

We call for the establishment of the proposed financial transaction tax to help build social protection systems in the most vulnerable countries, the least developed countries, contribute to sustainable climate adaptation, strengthen civil society worldwide and support more sustainable and equitable economies.

We call for improved access to information technology, especially for young people, to facilitate growth towards healthy communities in every sense: civic engagement, health, gender, education, food security and social stability.

We call upon the General Assembly to proclaim 21 December each year as International Low-Carbon Lifestyle Day, to be a day of reflection to live more simply and sustainably by recognizing the food-energy-water nexus, and call upon the Secretary-General to invite States Members of the United Nations, intergovernmental bodies, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, international institutions, cities, civil society and interested individuals and volunteers to mark the day with appropriate low-carbon events worldwide.

We hereby call upon Governments to work in partnership with civil society, the private sector and international institutions to fulfil the commitments set forth in this declaration before and at Rio+20.

Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

We are concerned that the current economic model, which promotes unsustainable consumption and production patterns, facilitates a grossly inequitable trading system, fails to eradicate poverty, assists in the exploitation of natural resources to the verge of extinction and total depletion, and has induced multiple crises on Earth, needs to be replaced by sustainable economies in the community, local, national, regional and international spheres.

We are also concerned that the prevailing economic development model, built on such policies as privatization, export-led development, structural adjustment, deregulation and substitution of technology for nature and driven by the goal of GDP growth, suffers from a series of market and institutional failures that render it inefficient, unsustainable, inequitable and an incorrect vehicle for advancing sustainable development goals.

We acknowledge the need to establish a new way to measure progress towards sustainable development with gender-specific and other indicators, including but not limited to civic engagement, integrating them with those of sustainable development, rather than relying solely on a country's GDP.

We call upon Governments and other stakeholders to make systematic use of population data and projections to anticipate and plan for population dynamics and address associated challenges in a proactive manner. Recognizing human rights and freedoms, Governments should enlarge individual choices and opportunities through universal access to sexual and reproductive health and family planning, empowerment of women, and investment in education, in particular of disadvantaged children and youth and girls and young women.

We call for the full and effective implementation of Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to ensure young people's rights to education, employment and health, emphasizing sexual and reproductive health, including access to contraceptives, and universal access to HIV prevention and treatment services, through the understanding of linkages between social, environmental and population dimensions.

We call upon Governments to start a debate that recognizes the choices we have to make about human populations as we consider the limits of the carrying capacity of the planet and the need to enable fair and equitable use of available resources and also leave space for wildlife and wilderness.

We are aware that the United Nations Development Programme human development index piloted, for the first time, such social indicators as education, gender equality and life expectancy to measure development, and that when Governments implement the Universal Social Protection Floor Initiative, there will be significant improvement in human well-being.

We recognize that the market and institutional failures take the form of prices that do not reflect the true environmental and social costs, underinvestment in natural, human, built and social capital, harmful and perverse subsidies, restricted access to information about production technologies and their impact, the lack of democratic economic governance, increasing unemployment and inadequate indicators of progress.

We are convinced that green economies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should be economic systems that foster citizen participation; require social justice and equity, gender equality, the protection of ecosystems and the promotion of economic sufficiency; aim for the core idea that green economies enhance the sustainable development and prosperity of all nations; ensure the well-being of all people; respect the rights, cultures, languages and wisdom of indigenous peoples and local communities; and safeguard animal welfare and conserve biodiversity for future generations, while stressing that a green economy does not replace sustainable development.

We acknowledge that a just transition to green economies within sustainable societies is in the context of sustainable development, elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty, climate justice and equitable investment in people's education, health and decent work and right livelihoods.

We also acknowledge that green economies within sustainable societies should ensure gender equality and democracy, improve human well-being, reduce environmental risks and ensure that jobs and social benefits are distributed equitably among all peoples.

Considering that sustainable economies should be based on far-sighted policymaking, we need pathways to green economies, low carbon development and new monetary policies with clear and binding targets and timetables.

For these reasons, we call upon Governments to:

- Ensure the extraction of materials only in a sustainable way and on a sufficiency basis and that these resources are utilized efficiently.
- Ensure the reuse of waste as raw material for new products to maximize the life cycle and take action by providing the right incentives for research and development.
- Phase out fossil fuel subsidies, setting up environmentally and socially friendly fiscal incentives and operationalizing wide-ranging innovative sources of finance, such as the proposed financial transaction tax.

- Facilitate the transition to an ecologically based, resilient, fair, fully inclusive and humane agriculture, and the establishment of a participatory mechanism to oversee the transition. The world's millions of smallholder farmers, especially women, need to be politically empowered and given access to appropriate resources and fair markets.

- Implement a just transition to sustainable economies as fast as possible through an unprecedented level of cooperation and policy coherence at the local, state, national and international levels, for South-South and triangular cooperation, by sharing green technologies and know-how, restructuring regulatory, taxation and expenditure policies and establishing democratic oversight of economic policy decision-making.

- Create green jobs and "green" existing jobs, with a special focus on youth, women and disadvantaged groups.

- Replace or supplement GDP and other traditional economic metrics with broader indicators.

- Institute sustainable procurement standards, including those encouraging the use of recycled products and renewable energy.

- Strengthen local economies and avoid the destruction of forests and biodiversity through support to independent certification systems based on robust principles and applied through transparent and balanced participatory processes, ensuring the rights and interests of indigenous peoples and local communities, and with independent, on-the-ground monitoring, reporting and verification. Governments and the private sector should pledge concrete and systematic support to and promotion of such multi-stakeholder-managed forest certification systems in all parts of the world, with particular emphasis on the tropical rainforests.

- Promote mutual supportiveness between trade and sustainable development and environmentally friendly fair-trade products.

- Regulate the economy to put an end to speculation on food and global commons.

- Promote local alternative economies, such as time banks and complementary monetary systems, and rethink the monetary system so that it is based on the carbon standard.

Institutional framework for sustainable development

We call for the establishment of a global sustainable development coordinating mechanism and parallel institutions at the national level, empowered to pursue system-wide policy coherence for the Bretton Woods and United Nations institutions to advance sustainable development principles, pathways and policies in a coordinated manner. Such a mechanism must involve interactive multi-stakeholder forums and regular meetings of Heads of State and Government to assess developments and provide leadership on economic, social and ecological issues, lead and oversee the global sustainable production and consumption governance process and help to secure consistency and coherence in the policy goals of all the major international organizations.

We also call for the establishment or reform of subcommittees on sustainable consumption and production to be operated within national councils for sustainable development, with a mandate to advise all national agencies working on sustainable consumption and production and national representatives on the intergovernmental sustainable consumption and production mechanisms. Sufficiently resourced national councils on sustainable development should be in place to drive the transition to green economies and develop a national sustainable green economy road map for each State Member of the United Nations by 2017.

We further call for the strengthening of national and international environmental laws, the establishment of an international environmental court and the strengthening of domestic judiciaries to deal with environmental disputes.

We call for the establishment of ombudspersons for future generations at the global, national and local levels, who will advocate for sustainable development, as envisaged and defined by the Brundtland Commission, to enhance the well-being and prospects of present and future generations to meet their needs, serve as an auditor at the heart of Governments and deal with citizens' complaints.

We also call for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to create a framework convention on corporate environmental and social responsibility for the accountability of corporate investments for all companies listed on stock exchanges worldwide and take into account the ISO 26000 standard on corporate accountability.

We move for the adoption of an intergovernmental mechanism or instrument to assess the environmental, health and socio-economic impact of new and emerging technologies, in line with the precautionary principle. We call for the outright ban on technologies that put the planet at grave risk.

We call for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to create a framework convention on international sustainability impact assessment, requiring the assessment of the sustainability implications for certain projects, plans, programmes, policies and legislative instruments.

We call upon the Rio+20 participants to launch negotiations for the establishment of an international convention on principle 10 of the Rio Declaration that deals with access to information, public participation and environmental justice.

We also call upon the Rio+20 participants to encourage the development of regional conventions on principle 10, to invite interested States to accede to the Aarhus Convention and to mandate the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to develop a robust programme to implement the 2010 Bali guidelines on principle 10.

We call for the strengthening of existing bodies of the United Nations Environment Programme and the upgrading of the Programme to the status of a high-level body in the United Nations system.

We also call for the widespread ratification and effective implementation of all multilateral environmental agreements.

We call upon national Governments to ratify and effectively implement the 1997 International Watercourses Convention, the only global environmental treaty that has not yet entered into force.

We call upon the United Nations to mainstream sustainable development into the "Delivering as one" process.

We call upon Governments to ensure that free prior informed consent is implemented with regard to development decisions and other decisions, such as the enhanced mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD-plus), that affect indigenous peoples and groups and tribal and local communities.

We call upon corporations to engage young people to make sustainable development initiatives a key part of their work, taking local communities into consideration.

We call upon all stakeholders to become open to new ways of volunteering, by connecting and engaging people through the Internet and other new technologies.

We recommend that collaborative strategies between communities and the private sector, through such corporate social responsibility programmes as employee volunteering, enhance existing volunteer opportunities to contribute to sustainable peace and development worldwide.

We also recommend the incorporation of volunteerism, citizen engagement and volunteers in all global, national and local plans and priorities for peace, sustainable development and human well-being to commit to the creation of an enabling environme it in which citizen engagement and voluntary action can flourish.

We further recommend the promotion of youth volunteering strategies that engage young people as agents for sustainable development and peace.

We recommend the documentation and exchange of best practices on the role of volunteers, in particular at the community level, in peace, sustainable development and human well-being efforts, including at each stage of disaster management — prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

We also recommend the creation of an academy of Olympic volunteers to be facilitated by the past directors of Olympic volunteer programmes in host cities of the Olympic Games, with the close cooperation of interested non-governmental organizations and members of the International Olympic Committee, and that volunteerism be officially recognized as the fourth pillar of the Olympic movement, along with sports, culture and the environment.

We call upon:

- Governments to recognize the power, economic and social value of volunteerism to achieve national development goals and well-being and to provide a supportive environment for sustaining volunteerism with resources and support for infrastructure, as well as recognition of the values of civic participation.
- The private sector to actively engage in employee volunteering and partnerships in enhancing the capacities of volunteers involved in organizations for achieving sustainable peace and development.
- The media to communicate to the public the value of volunteerism and join as a stakeholder in promoting a supportive environment for community engagement and volunteerism.

- Civil society to mainstream volunteerism and civic engagement strategies into sustainable peace and development programming.
- Educational institutions and academia to integrate volunteerism and an understanding of civil society into curricula and similar structures to promote a deeper and more universal understanding of civic service and volunteering.
- The research community to carry out more research and studies on, but not limited to, the value and impact of volunteerism on development and the role of volunteering in crisis prevention and response, and to develop new indicators of progress that incorporate citizen engagement, voluntary action and human well-being.
- Faith traditions to affirm volunteering for peace and development as an appropriate response to the spiritual call to service and human well-being.
- Volunteer-involving organizations to ensure the effectiveness and accountability of volunteerism through sound governance, development of capacity to manage volunteers, and monitoring and evaluation of their impact.
- All stakeholders to call for a world volunteer coalition to provide a platform for promotion, knowledge-sharing, capacity development and collective action on volunteerism.
- Governments, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to renew efforts to implement General Assembly resolution 56/38 and subsequent resolutions on measures to support volunteerism, and look forward to further actions by the Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers and to continue to call for global recognition, support and advocacy for volunteerism for sustainable peace and development.

We call upon Governments and stakeholders to adopt a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development and human well-being through a gender-sensitive, community-centred approach that utilizes the significant role, contributions and value of volunteers to address sustainable development, livelihoods, fair trade, food insecurity, energy, forestry, water, health, HIV/AIDS, disasters and other issues.

We call upon the actors of the Arab Spring to establish their own non-governmental organizations quickly, and to apply for association with the Department of Public Information, so as to communicate with the United Nations and disseminate information about the United Nations to their constituents and other non-governmental organizations, thus compensating as soon as possible for wasted years under dictatorships with denial of freedom of expression.

We call upon non-governmental organizations in the Middle East, North Africa and the Arab region to ask their Governments to invite the Department of Public Information to host the sixty-fifth annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations.

We call upon the Executive Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations Associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information to adopt the following theme for any conference dedicated to or hosted in the Middle East, North Africa or the Arab region: "Diversity: the only path to sustainable peace and development".

We call upon Governments to acknowledge the importance of civil society organizations for the promotion of volunteerism and to recognize that strengthening dialogue and interaction between civil society and the United Nations contributes to the expansion of volunteerism.

We note with appreciation the contributions of the United Nations Volunteers over the past 10 years and the marking of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers.

We also note with appreciation the efforts of all Conference participants to increase awareness of volunteerism through global outreach, information-sharing and education.

Sustainable lifestyles

We are convinced that our planet and the human-earth community will only survive, thrive and prosper by shifting to an economy that is sustainable, equitable and focused on the elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty through the actions of responsive citizens and volunteerism.

We note that unsustainable consumption and production patterns have been major contributors to climate change and poverty, and that sustainable development can only be ensured if humanity, directed and led by Government policies, embraces humane, sustainable, low-carbon lifestyles and adopts sustainable livelihoods.

We also note that sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods must be built on sustainable consumption and production in our globalizing world and equity among generations, genders, nations, cultures and languages.

We acknowledge that sustainable consumption, in particular, needs to consider the minimization of the environmental impact of purchasing decisions and the maximization of the social impact of our purchases.

We reaffirm consequently that individuals, families and communities are key actors in achieving sustainable consumption and production and should be empowered and enabled through education in everyday life competencies to assume responsibility for achieving sustainable lifestyles all around the world.

Civic engagement in sustainable development governance

We note that streamlining management of multilateral environment agreements, drawing on the foundations of community participation and governance structures and education for sustainable development, can provide better understanding to resolve complex sustainability issues.

We denounce the growing scarcity of resources to civil society organizations, oppressive action against social movements and the increasing criminalization of environmental and indigenous movements in many countries by Governments and large multinational corporations.

We reaffirm that civic participation, including volunteering, has been a valuable partner in a broad spectrum of peace and sustainable development activities, with the overriding goal of poverty eradication and the betterment of the human condition, among a number of other causes.

We recognize the contributions of civil society, non-governmental organization movements, trade unions, social entrepreneurs and volunteer alliances and associations, which are ready to share responsibility with local and national Governments in their communities.

We note the threats to freedom of expression, association and assembly. It is vital that the principles enshrined in the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders are respected in law and practice.

We reaffirm that the genuine involvement of youth, women and wider civil society in decision-making processes and partnerships, as stressed in section III of Agenda 21, is critical to the success of sustainable development initiatives.

Other issues to be considered at Rio+20

Education and learning for sustainable development

We acknowledge the necessity to reaffirm the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

We are convinced that the shift to a sustainable society is deeply dependent on the educational system.

We affirm that education should address the material, social and spiritual dimensions of human development, and, in its fullest sense, education must provide the space for value-based sustainable learning.

We call for the respect and inclusion of ethnic languages in the educational system, as those languages comprise the complexity of their respective environments, and consideration of the potential of a neutral international language that combines ease of learning and clarity with neutrality, and therefore can be seen as inherently sustainable.

We call upon educational institutions to increase their participation in the transformation process for a sustainable society, in order to enhance the capacity-building of communities in which those institutions are located and create an environment in which satisfying and sustained education can take place, developing national respect for education in natural, cultural and world heritage, thereby mainstreaming education for sustainable development in lifelong learning.

We recognize that music, as a natural and global common resource, should be used in education to connect generations and global communities, to give voice to all and enable them to participate in issues of global concern and in providing solutions to global challenges.

We are aware that successful education and learning in all its forms depend on the full support of Governments at all levels, the private sector, policymakers and civil society.

We suggest the construction of laboratory schools in the context of post-conflict development that will teach skills through a variety of tools, including sports, to develop holistically minded citizens.

Sustainable development goals

To achieve the goals of Rio+20 in an ambitious, time-bound and accountable manner, we call upon Governments, in accordance with human rights, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and respective capabilities, to adopt the following draft sustainable development goals together with the subgoals, reasons and clarifications relating to each goal.

The goals below are aspirational. While some of the goals are based on commitments already made by Governments and other stakeholders, others are proposed on the basis of advanced thinking among civil society organizations.

Sustainable development goal: sustainable consumption and production

By 2020, consistent with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the human ecological footprint is reduced so that it remains within the Earth's biological carrying capacity. In accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, we call upon nations and populations engaged in wasteful overconsumption to reduce their impact and help to increase the consumption of vital goods and services by impoverished nations and peoples, so that they, too, can enjoy reasonably high standards of living that provide equitable access to health care, decent work opportunities and education.

By 2020, Governments should promote production processes that reflect the best available technologies for eco-efficiency, recycling, remanufacturing, reuse of waste materials and product durability and longevity. Wasteful practices, such as planned obsolescence, are identified and eliminated. Public procurement standards and incentives reward leading corporations that share and disseminate best green practices worldwide. By 2020, the majority of the world's goods and services are procured by Governments from sources certified by objective third parties as sustainably produced.

This goal is tied to the preparation and implementation of sustainability or green economy road maps that consider and address commonly agreed sustainability principles, adopt sustainable development goals in critical areas and implement governance reforms to foster the transition to a green economy and to improve the institutional framework for sustainable development.

Furthermore, Governments should establish a set of millennium consumption goals for the period 2012-2020 towards creating an intergenerational and internationally shared right to equitable consumption opportunities and ensuring the quality of life and well-being of all people by 2020, while eradicating all kinds and levels of poverty, respecting animal welfare and embedding sufficiency-based sustainable economies.

Sustainable development goal: sustainable livelihoods, youth and education

By 2015, nations commit to the principle of sustainable livelihoods as a right for all people and implement monetary, fiscal and language policies to encourage full and decent work. By 2020, biodiversity and ecosystem service considerations are mainstreamed within existing rural development platforms and initiatives to conserve sustainable livelihoods in indigenous and local communities that depend on natural capital for survival.

By 2015, Governments incorporate within development frameworks, as a priority, investments in the education, health and employment of young people, who constitute a large proportion of the population of developing countries and face disproportionate levels of poverty, unemployment, gender discrimination and ill health. Governments should support comprehensive policies, youth participation and multisectoral programmes that empower present and future generations to fully and freely exercise their human rights, fulfil their aspirations and be productive citizens.

By 2030, national Governments reorient all national aims and objectives towards achieving sustainable societies and will mainstream sustainable development into all national educational policies and curriculums.

By 2020, consistent with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, Governments ensure that people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

Sustainable development goal: climate sustainability

By 2050, Governments should have reached clear pathways towards climate sustainability that regulates the global temperature rise below 1.5° C. Emissions of greenhouse gases should be reduced to 25 per cent of 1990 levels by 2020, 40 per cent by 2030, 60 per cent by 2040 and 80 per cent by 2050. Carbon taxes and tariffs should be in place to provide incentives for low-carbon development and manufacturing, finance greenhouse gas emission reduction projects, REDD-plus and other offset mechanisms, and green infrastructure solutions to help vulnerable communities adapt to climate change.

Developed countries, as the main cause of climate change, in assuming their historical responsibility, must recognize and honour their climate debt in all of its dimensions as the basis for a just, effective, and scientific solution to climate change. The above goal should include the equitable sharing of remaining atmospheric space, considering past use and consumption and mid- and long-term emission reduction targets that are in line with what science requires.

Sustainable development goal: clean energy

By 2030, at least 50 per cent of the world's energy supply comes from renewable sources. By 2020, energy demand is reduced through efficiency and conservation by at least 20 per cent. By 2030, energy poverty is eliminated by providing universal access to modern energy services from renewable sources.

Sustainable development goal: biodiversity

Governments are urged to honour their commitments to implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, in particular those related to the green economy, such as target 2, which states that by 2020 at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems; and target 3, which states, inter alia, that by 2020 at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts. We urge Governments to support investments in natural infrastructure and

ecological restoration and to facilitate the development of markets that value the regulatory services provided by ecosystems.

Sustainable development goal: water

By 2030, Governments achieve universal availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, ecosystems, production and adequate sanitation, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks to people, environments and economies. This goal is over and above the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation is recognized as a human right, and it is the responsibility of all States to respect such right. As an interim goal, by 2015 the proportion of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water, and without access to basic sanitation is halved, as agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

By 2020, local, municipal and national Governments and all stakeholders commit to achieving the following intermediate targets:

- A 20 per cent increase in total food supply-chain efficiency — reducing losses and waste from field to fork
- A 20 per cent increase in water efficiency in agriculture — more nutrition and crop per drop
- A 20 per cent increase in water use efficiency in energy production — more kilowatt-hours per drop
- A 20 per cent increase in the quantity of water reused
- A 20 per cent decrease in water pollution

Sustainable development goal: healthy seas and oceans (blue economy)

By 2020, consistent with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, Governments establish at least 10 per cent coastal and marine areas. By 2030, oceanic dead zones are recovered by reducing nitrogen runoff from land by 50 per cent or more. By 2020, marine protected areas are established in at least 25 per cent of each exclusive economic zone and the high seas in representative networks capable of restoring minimum viable populations of all at-risk stocks, protecting marine biological diversity, and maximizing benefits to commercial and subsistence fishers in surrounding waters. By 2015, the use of bottom trawling, dynamite fishing, electrofishing, poisons and other unsustainable practices is eliminated. By 2030, the decline of fish stocks is reversed and sustainable, diverse and abundant fish stocks are created, supported by healthy habitats, to provide for the needs of all users, and by 2015, the practice of shark finning is banned.

We also make the following policy recommendations: (a) reduce plastic pollution in the oceans, including by banning or taxing single-use plastics, supporting the use of recycled plastics in new products and holding manufacturers responsible for plastics through their entire life cycle; (b) establish an international monitoring network for ocean acidification to enable the identification of vulnerable regions and industries and to provide an early warning system for industries already experiencing harm; (c) designate the high seas of the Central Arctic Ocean as a zone for international scientific cooperation, where extractive and polluting activities are

suspended until we have a better understanding of the area and the potential effects of such activities; and (d) schedule, as a matter of urgency, an intergovernmental conference to address the multiplying threats to ocean areas beyond the jurisdiction of individual nations.

Sustainable development goal: healthy forests

By 2020, all remaining frontier forests are protected from conversion and degradation, consistent with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, with a well-resourced and equitably governed REDD-plus mechanism in place, which respects the rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities and other environmental and governance safeguards, to reward developing countries for the protection and sustainable management of their forests, not only for carbon capture and storage but for their wider ecological services. A policy of "no net loss" of forest land, globally and nationally, is also achieved by 2020. At that time, all new forest areas cleared are offset by the ecologically sound restoration of forests in nearby areas. The restoration of over 150 million hectares of cleared or degraded forest landscapes is achieved by 2020, with the creation of millions of new jobs and enhanced livelihoods, improved security and adaptation to climate change.

Deforestation emissions should be reduced by key corporations and their supply chains committing to avoid the purchase of products that cause deforestation, such as soy or cattle from deforested lands in the Brazilian Amazon, palm oil from deforested agricultural land in Indonesia or illegal wood and wood products throughout the world.

In addition, stakeholders everywhere should undertake and/or participate in large-scale, environmentally and socially responsible reforestation efforts.

Measures proposed under the clean development mechanism must be carefully examined by the communities depending on forests for their subsistence, as we see that the measures favour already significant land-grabbing and the destruction of their livelihoods.

At Rio+20, we call upon Governments to pledge concrete and systematic support and promotion of multi-stakeholder-managed forest certification systems in all parts of the world, with particular emphasis on tropical rainforests.

Sustainable development goal: sustainable agriculture

By 2030, global agricultural production is transformed from industrial to sustainable. Chemical inputs, herbicides and pesticides are largely replaced with organic and biological alternatives. Interspersed natural areas are protected and restored as sources of pollination, pest control and soil fertility. Food for export is secondary to food for local consumption. Cultivated crop strains are diversified, as are production techniques and the mix of agricultural producers. Best management practices reduce erosion by 90 per cent and nitrogen runoff by 50 per cent or more. The local ecological knowledge of indigenous peoples and traditional and local communities is utilized to identify resilient crops and cultivation practices that provide maximum protection against climate change.

This goal should also include sustainable and humane food systems that provide healthy food to meet current food needs while maintaining healthy ecosystems and farmer resilience, and ensure good animal health and welfare that

can also provide food for generations to come with minimal negative impact to the environment, through agro-ecological farming systems. We consider the right of farmers to keep their own seeds as an important issue of farming.

A sustainable and humane food system should promote the food sovereignty of communities; empower small-scale food producers in food and agricultural governance; encourage local production and distribution infrastructures, with equal opportunities for men and women farmers, and the important role of youth in this area; and make nutritious food available, accessible and affordable to all, while at the same time providing sustainable livelihoods to producers through the payment of fair prices for their products. Sustainable food systems must be based on food sovereignty and the right of small-scale peasants, women's groups and local communities to plant and exchange their seeds and share their knowledge.

Strong and increasing support should be given to small-scale farming, producing healthy foods through targeted research, extension services and enabling conditions and, wherever possible, vegetarian diets; and ensuring women's property and inheritance rights.

The important role and special needs of women as the primary producers and purchasers of food, along with the implementation of women's property and inheritance rights, should be recognized and supported by all means possible.

Sustainable development goal: green cities

By 2030, cities develop and implement action plans to address transport, public health and environmental needs in a harmonious and integrated way. By 2030, from the local to the national levels, Government policies foster compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, urban development that minimizes energy use and maximizes residential health and that reflects the concept of a society for all ages. All new buildings meet green building standards by 2030. By 2030, city transport needs are or remain predominantly met by mass transport, walking and bicycling. Quality of life is also improved for residents by 2030, providing access to green buildings with urban rooftop gardens, clean water, clean energy, waste management systems and sustainable transport. By 2030, urban areas with significant storm water pollution issues reduce impervious surface area by 30 per cent below 2012 levels.

Sustainable development goal: subsidies and investment

By 2020 at the latest, consistent with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, harmful incentives, including subsidies, for fossil fuel production, unsustainable agricultural, fisheries and forest practices, and those harmful to biodiversity, are eliminated, phased out or redirected to promote renewable energy, sustainable practices and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. By 2015, Governments commit to a minimum investment of 2 per cent of GDP per year to foster the transition to a green economy, taking into account national socio-economic conditions.

Sustainable development goal: new indicators of progress

By 2020, nations supplement or replace GDP with a new measure of sustainable economic welfare based on best available information at that time. Economic performance and the forecasted effects of policy changes will be

measured by this new metric. We encourage a process of continuous improvement and refinement of the new measure over time and an international process to set standards and make available common methods and data sources. We also encourage the adoption of several other headline indicators of environmental, economic, social, cultural and linguistic sustainability to provide a measure of progress towards the green economy transition, such as civic participation, improved well-being and achievement of sustainable development goals.

Sustainable development goal: access to information

By 2022, Governments enact and implement freedom of information laws giving people the right to obtain accurate and truthful information held by their Government, especially on the environment. Governments actively make available to all stakeholders useful, accurate, truthful and well-publicized data and information in appropriate formats and languages, including on the Internet. These laws should include whistle-blower protection and should extend to information disclosure by corporations.

Sustainable development goal: public participation

By 2022, Governments need to ensure that volunteerism and citizen engagement are incorporated in all global, national and local action plans for the implementation of sustainable development and human well-being, to commit to the creation of an enabling environment for citizen engagement and voluntary action, and will include mandatory public participation in: (a) major development project approvals and environmental impact assessment procedures; (b) drafting of national-level, sustainable development policies, laws and regulations; and (c) administrative decisions, such as pollution permitting.

Sustainable development goal: access to redress and remedy

By 2022, Governments adopt and implement laws ensuring effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings concerning sustainable development, including redress and remedy. In particular, they ensure that the costs of such proceedings are reasonable and affordable to affected people and that access to such proceedings is available through the expansion of legal standing and other means to interested people and organizations.

Sustainable development goal: environmental justice for the poor and marginalized

By 2022, Governments adopt laws that obligate their agencies to take appropriate measures to provide information and engage affected people living in poverty, women and other disadvantaged groups when making sustainable development decisions.

Sustainable development goal: basic health

By 2015, Governments support the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals related to health and contribute to health, well-being and sustainable development, ensure universal access to health care and services, wherever feasible, free at the point of use for women and children, and including sexual and reproductive health, and thus strengthen the resilience of people and communities to the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation.

We call on Governments to foster sustainable health systems as an indispensable condition for the sustainable development of societies through the provision of essential health services, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the creation of healthy cross-sectoral public policies.

We endorse the finalization of a global mercury treaty by February 2013 that will aggressively limit the global use and trade in mercury and reduce global mercury emissions.

We recommend a ban on the export of mercury and the mining of mercury for export and secure the agreement of chloralkali and mining companies not to place mercury into commerce and to take responsibility for ensuring its safe management.

We also recommend the creation of new partnerships on the responsible sourcing of raw materials for production and the regulation of specific harmful chemicals.

We call for the further strengthening of the World Health Organization in this process.

We call on Governments to address social determinants of health as a means of reducing global health inequities by acknowledging that all policies affect health. Health equity is paramount for sustainable societies.

We also call upon Governments to make direct and relevant interventions to improve young people's health, ensuring their role as agents of change for a sustainable society, and to ensure the development of financing mechanisms for health systems.

We welcome the recognition of the work of the United Nations Volunteers programme as the focal point for the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers, and request it to continue to raise awareness of the contribution of volunteerism to sustainable development, to act as a convener on the subject for the various interested stakeholders, to make available networking and reference resources and to provide technical cooperation to developing countries, at their request.

We call upon the United Nations, through its regular budgetary process and mechanisms, to enable the Department of Public Information to host the annual Conference and to provide the Department with the needed financial and human resources on a consistent and predictable basis.

We thank the people and Government of Germany and the City and Mayor of Bonn for their warm welcome and for hosting the sixty-fourth annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations.

We ask that all parties involved in United Nations conferences increase their efforts towards reducing the ecological footprint of these events and hereby set a positive example.